

# **News Items and Public Crime Summary for Week Ending May 1, 2010**

## **Curacao - Coast Guard Seizes Illegal Fishing Nets, Migrants**

The Coast Guard of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba (CGNAA) seized nine illegal nets last Wednesday and arrested two undocumented persons the following day. The nets and fishing cages were found close to Venezuela's territorial waters. The next day, a CGNAA patrol spotted a boat four miles south of Curaçao's St. Anna Bay with two suspected Venezuelan nationals on board and arrested them for not having the required papers. Authorities are investigating both cases (Amigoe, La Prensa, Daily Herald).

## **St. Maarten - Prison Guards On Strike**

Guards at the Pointe Blanche Prison went on strike today. They planned to meet with their union ABVO in the morning, before a meeting with Justice State Secretary Ernie Simmons in the afternoon. Union President Randall Salome said that the guards were fed up with Prison Director Rudsel Ricardo. Salome said all of the prison's nearly 100 guards were on board for the gathering. Salome blamed last week Monday's prison riot on the director's alleged mismanagement (Amigoe, Daily Herald).

## **Aruba - Aruba Delegation Visits Petrobras**

An Aruba Government delegation led by Finance, Utilities, Communication and Energy Minister Mike de Meza (AVP) is in Brazil to consult with oil companies Valero and Petrobras on possible cooperation concerning operation of the shut-down refinery on the island. The Brazilian state-owned company Petrobras indicated earlier this month possible interest in a joint venture on the Aruba refinery with U.S. owner Valero. Valero has now joined with, among others, director Ray Buckley, who also had contact with the Venezuelan state-owned oil company PdVSA on the possibilities of a new start for the refinery. Canadian energy company Pacific Rubiales is another candidate for a takeover or joint venture with Valero (Bon Dia Aruba, Daily Herald, Extra).

## **Curacao - U.S. FOL Helps Out Youth Air Brigade**

The U.S. Forward Operating Location (FOL) staff joined forces with the Curaçao Youth Air Brigade in a renovation project for the latter's building located near the terminal at Hato International Airport. Tiles were removed from two meeting rooms and an office, and walls and floors received a new coat of paint. More paint work will continue on the building in the coming weeks. Cadet leader Sherwin Gerard was very grateful when he said, "We want to thank the U.S. FOL for not only allowing us to tour their facilities and planes last month, but now you have come to our house to help us. We want to continue this tremendous partnership in the future. Thank you very much!" (La Prensa, Daily Herald).

### **Aruba - No Agreement With Petrobras Yet**

Brazilian oil company Petrobras and U.S.-owned Valero have not been able to conclude an agreement with regard to the Aruba refinery. However, Petrobras has left the doors open for cooperation with Valero, announced Aruba Minister of Finances, Utilities, Communication and Energy Mike de Meza (AVP). An Aruba delegation had left for Brazil last week to negotiate with Petrobras on a possible joint venture. However, according to De Meza, the Brazilian oil company clearly indicated that the market is still too tight. De Meza was also informed that Petrobras does not have any interest in purchasing the refinery. The Aruba Government is looking for candidates regarding a possible take-over of the refinery, or a joint venture with Valero who will maintain the job guarantee of their personnel at the refinery until June 1. The Venezuelan state-owned company PdVSA and the Canadian Pacific Rubiales are still in the picture for possible deals (Various newspapers).

### **St. Maarten - Prison And Union Agree To Talk**

Pointe Blanche Prison guards and management agreed to talk their problems out in private, after a public squabble that started last week between guards' union ABVO and Prison Director Rudsel Ricardo about prison safety and alleged mismanagement resulted in a short strike yesterday. State Secretary for Justice Ernie Simmons mediated a discussion between Ricardo and the union that put an end to the strike in the short term. ABVO had blamed prison management for last week Monday's inmate riot, during which inmates occupied the prison's communications post and damaged office equipment. A union spokesperson refused to discuss yesterday's meeting or the terms on which the union, management and the State Secretary had decided (Daily Herald).

### **Aruba - Credit Card Fraud Probe**

Aruba Police are conducting an extensive investigation into the theft of credit cards and credit card information. A number of arrests have been made and four suspects have been taken into custody since February. Most cases involve citizens of the Dominican Republic and Venezuela, according to criminal investigator Roy Tromp. He said the thieves were often difficult to apprehend because they operated in small groups through a widespread network. They apply the skimming method, a technique in which data from a legitimate credit card is copied to a blank, false card. The false credit cards are used everywhere, but mainly to purchase expensive equipment and to pay restaurant and hotel bills (Daily Herald).

### **St. Maarten - Two Ministries Passed To Island Government**

Yesterday documents were signed to formalize the transfer of the tasks and responsibilities of two ministries from the Central Government to the Island Government of St. Maarten. PM Emily de Jongh- Elhage and Constitutional Affairs Minister Roland Duncan signed the documents for the symbolic transfer of the tasks of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth Affairs and the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Affairs in the presence of St. Maarten Government leader and Constitutional Affairs Commissioner William Marlin, Health and Social Affairs Commissioner Hyacinth Richardson and a number of other dignitaries. The transfer went into effect on April 19.

These two sectors are now able to execute tasks formerly carried out by the Central Government, but they will not be classified as “ministries” until St. Maarten assumes its new constitutional status on October 10. PM De Jongh-Elhage called the transfer the “beginning of the end” of the Netherlands Antilles and the start of the new entity St. Maarten (Daily Herald, Antilliaans Dagblad).

### **Curacao - Full Start-Up For Isla Refinery Not Possible This Year**

A full start-up of the Isla refinery will not be possible this year because of a lack of reserve capacity and repair activities, which are not going as planned. The intention to have the refinery partially restarted as of May 5, also seems a lost case. The Curaçao Utilities Operating Company (CUOC), that manages the Build Own and Operate (BOO) power plant for owner Curaçao Utilities Company (CUC), has indicated as much. Failing compressors and insufficient steam supply are the two main bottlenecks, according to Herbert Mensche, director of Refineria di Kòrsou (RdK). The seven compressors, which the Isla refinery had brought in from abroad as a temporary solution, have meanwhile arrived, but with two compressors out of order, there is no reserve capacity. “It remains to be seen whether the Isla refinery wants to restart without a back-up. The slightest hiccup would mean another standstill for the refinery”, said Mensche. Union PWFC Chairman Angelo Meyer urged the parties involved to arrange for the purchase of even more mobile compressors (Amigoe).

### **Curacao - Caribbean Shipping And Caribbean Cruise Conferences To Be Held In Curaçao**

Curaçao Ports Authority (CPA) will be host to two major conferences in May and June: the Caribbean Shipping Executive Conference (CSEC) from May 16-19, and the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) Platinum Conference from June 14-17. The CSEC’s purpose is to offer its members a broad network platform in the shipping sector. Some 150 guests are expected to attend the CSEC. The FCCA Conference expects participation from the nautical and cruise business sectors. CPA and Aruba Ports Authority recently decided to cooperate closely to stimulate the cruise sector (Amigoe, Antilliaans Dagblad).

## **CURAÇAO**

### ***Crime April 23 – 28***

On April 27 a woman was robbed after she had withdrawn money from an ATM in Saliña. When she entered her vehicle, a man jumped onto the backseat, threatened her with a knife and took her money. The following day, a female pedestrian in Punda was robbed. The suspect was later arrested (Extra, La Prensa, Antilliaans Dagblad).

## ARUBA

### ***Police receive new vests***

The Aruba Police Department recently received new bullet resistant vests for its officers. Justice Minister Arthur Dowers was personally at hand to deliver the first batch of 200 vests to Chief of Police Peter de Witte. Acquisition of the vests was funded by the Aruba Development Fund (Diario Aruba, Extra, 24 Ora).

## ST. MAARTEN

### ***Crime April 23 – 28***

On April 23 the body of a woman was found in her home in Sucker Garden. Police investigators suspect foul play based on evidence found at the scene (Daily Herald, Amigoe).

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*"The Weekly Press Summary is a compilation of stories running in the Netherlands Antilles and Aruban press that is intended to alert readers about items of interest to them. There is no interpretation or verification of the facts contained therein."*